

## How are the trains performing?

WSDOT measures the performance of Amtrak *Cascades* in a number of important ways. Key performance measures include ridership, on-time performance, customer satisfaction, and farebox recovery. Performance statistics are available in WSDOT's Gray Notebook quarterly report and at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail).

## Will WSDOT add more Amtrak *Cascades* service?

The only service change WSDOT anticipates over the next several years is the extension of the Seattle-Bellingham trains to Vancouver, BC in summer 2008. The existing state budget for passenger rail construction projects in Washington will not result in any new daily service—based on the current construction agreement between WSDOT and the BNSF Railway. The projects WSDOT will construct over the next several years will reduce the travel times for all passenger trains between Seattle and Portland and will help the trains stay on schedule.

However, it may be possible to add more trains if additional federal funds are made available. If this occurs, WSDOT will work with the Governor, the state legislature, BNSF railway and Amtrak to identify opportunities to add additional daily service.

## What are the key construction projects WSDOT will be working on over the next five years?

WSDOT plans to spend over \$200 million to support development of Amtrak *Cascades* intercity passenger rail service between 2007 and 2011. Listed below are some of the key projects based on the 2006 transportation budget approved by the Governor and the state legislature. Additional project information is available at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail/).

**Vancouver Rail Project** - \$104 million: This project will help reduce rail line congestion through the Vancouver Rail Yard, which is one of the busiest rail yards in the region. The project will help Amtrak *Cascades* trains stay on schedule and allow WSDOT to add more daily trains in the future.

**Point Defiance Bypass Project** - \$57 million: This project will allow for the relocation of passenger trains away from the Port of Tacoma and the tunnel under Point Defiance. This relocation will help Amtrak *Cascades* trains stay on schedule and will cut the travel time between Seattle and Portland by six minutes.

**King Street Station Renovation and Track Improvements** - \$31 million: Two separate projects at Seattle's historic King Street Station will renovate the 100-year old train station and allow for a greater number of commuter and intercity passenger trains to move in and out of the facility.

## How will WSDOT continue to improve Amtrak *Cascades* service?

WSDOT will continue to work with BNSF and Amtrak to improve Amtrak *Cascades* on-time performance. Ensuring that the trains stay on schedule is very important to WSDOT, the Governor, and Amtrak *Cascades* passengers.

In addition, WSDOT will work with the Province of British Columbia and Amtrak to begin preparing for additional daily service to Vancouver, BC in Summer 2008.



Vancouver, BC is the northern terminus for Amtrak *Cascades*.



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

# WSDOT and Amtrak *Cascades*



Since 1994 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has worked with railroads, Amtrak, the state of Oregon, the Province of British Columbia, and others to provide fast, reliable, and more frequent intercity passenger rail service along the Interstate 5 corridor. The service, known as Amtrak *Cascades*, provides travelers transportation options for their intercity trips.

## For more information

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What is WSDOT’s role in Amtrak *Cascades*?

The Washington State Legislature instructed WSDOT to develop intercity passenger rail service between Portland, OR, Seattle, Bellingham, and Vancouver, British Columbia (BC). WSDOT is responsible for planning and project identification; budget development; construction project management and reporting; operations oversight and reporting; local, regional, state, national, and international program coordination; public education; public involvement; and marketing activities. Since 1994 WSDOT has invested over \$280 million in public funds for track and signal improvements, new train equipment, station construction and renovations, and train operations.

What cities are served by Amtrak *Cascades*?

Amtrak *Cascades* passenger trains stop in 17 cities along a 466-mile rail corridor that spans from Eugene, Oregon to Vancouver, BC. The average distance between stations is around 30 miles. These cities and adjacent communities are home to nearly eight million residents.

What’s it like to ride on Amtrak *Cascades*?

Each Amtrak *Cascades* train seats up to 244 people, with space for four mobility-impaired passengers. The trains offer coach class and Business Class seating. Each passenger car has electrical outlets, large windows for sightseeing, and video monitors that show a safety briefing, movies, and real-time trip information. Each train has a Bistro car that offers fresh local foods, snacks, light meals, and beverages. The trains also have several restrooms, a lounge car, and a baggage car for luggage and bicycles. On-board services—including security, ticketing, luggage assistance, food and beverage sales, and traveler information—are provided by Amtrak personnel.

Amtrak *Cascades* trains travel at speeds up to 79 mph and have a specially-designed tilting suspension system that allows the trains to move through curves at higher speeds while maintaining passenger comfort.



How much does it cost to ride the train? How do I get tickets?

Ticket prices vary by the length of the trip and season of travel. Fares between Seattle and Portland, and Seattle and Vancouver, BC range from \$28 to \$45 each way. Business Class seating is slightly more. Purchase tickets well in advance to get the best prices. A variety of travel deals are available as well as everyday discounts for kids, seniors, AAA members, the military, and more.

Every train trip starts with a reservation and a ticket. There are several ways to make a reservation and purchase tickets:

- Visit [www.AmtrakCascades.com](http://www.AmtrakCascades.com).
- Call 1-800-USA-Rail.
- Go to a staffed Amtrak station.
- Use a QuikTrak machine at an Amtrak station.

Purchase tickets online or by phone at least ten calendar days in advance (15 days in Canada), and Amtrak will mail them to you. Tickets purchased online or by phone, less than ten calendar days in advance, can be delivered overnight for a fee.



What’s the difference between Amtrak *Cascades* and *Sounder* commuter trains?

Amtrak *Cascades* trains connect major population centers along a 466-mile corridor and operate each day of the week. Amtrak *Cascades* riders are typically using the trains for recreation and shopping trips, to

visit family or friends, and for some business trips and commuting. The average trip length for an Amtrak *Cascades* passenger is around 150 miles.

Sound Transit’s *Sounder* commuter trains provide peak hour train service between the major population centers of the central Puget Sound region Monday through Friday, with some trains offered on weekends for Seattle sporting events. *Sounder* riders typically travel between their homes and their places of work on a regular basis. The average trip length for a *Sounder* rider is around 20 miles.

To learn more about *Sounder* commuter trains, go to [www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org).



How is Amtrak *Cascades* service paid for?

The operation of Amtrak *Cascades* is funded by passengers, the states of Washington and Oregon, and Amtrak. Funding from the state of Washington comes from taxes collected from the sale of new and used motor vehicles, rental cars, and vehicle weight fees. These funds are directed to WSDOT’s intercity passenger rail program by the Governor and the state legislature. Some federal grants are also received by WSDOT for rail projects. It should be noted that no state or federal gas tax dollars can be spent on rail construction projects or Amtrak *Cascades* operations.

State and some federal funds go toward rail construction projects that allow Amtrak *Cascades* trains to run safely, reliably, more frequently, and with reduced travel times between cities. State funds are also used for day-to-day operation of the trains.

Amtrak *Cascades* Milestones

